THE

"HINDU MESSAGE"

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems from the Hindu Standpoint.

Editors: K. Sundararama Aiyar M.A., & T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar B.A.

VOL. 1.] THURSDAY DECEMBER 20, 1917. [No. 9.

The **Hindu Message** stands for

(1) The Maintenance of British supremacy with self-government for India,

(2) Co-operation with the different communities of India without prejudice to Hindu Dharma,

(3) Education of the Hindus as an integral part of the Indian Nation,

(4) Advancement of Material prosperity on a spiritual basis and

(5) Dissemination of pure Hindu Culture.

Annual Subscription Rs. 6 only.

For *bona fide* students Rs. 3 only.

Single copy As. 2 only.

All business communications and remittances to be addressed to the Manager and all literary contributions and books for Review to be addressed to the Editor, THE HINDU MESSAGE, *Srirangam.*

A Vision Of India.

THE HIMALAYAS—VI.

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

With trembling limbs and full of deep despair
Sweet Uma hastened from that flaming spot
Where Love with Godhead great had vainly fought
And lost his life though he did nobly dare.
She threw aside her silken garments fair
And gems with which His grace could not be bought
She knew that He the Free could yet be caught
By service pure, by penance, and by prayer.
She fixed her mind on Him forgetting time
In contemplation of His heavenly grace
And held Him prisoner in devotion's chains
As poets captive hold in chains of rhyme
The Muse by pure and dedicated days
Of love outsoaring worldly joys and pains.

The Hindu Message

THURSDAY EVENING 20, DEC. 1917.

Post-War Reform and Hindu Society—V.

The question we have now to consider is, what measures or means are Government to adopt in order to determine the value or expediency of changes affecting Hindu society which may at different times be put forward by Indian legislators or reformers. Clearly a mixed assembly consisting of the members of our legislative councils cannot be accepted as suitable for such a purpose. Nor can even the Hindu members of such an assembly be so accepted, for they cannot be qualified to appreciate the true significance and aim of our Dharma. Most of them are likely to be drawn from the class of modern denationalised and de-Hinduised men calling themselves by the name *Hindus*,—a term which they usually regard as only differentiating them from Mohammedans or Christians—and which has no other definite or permanent positive significance,—a term which any one is entitled to for the simple reason that he chooses to apply it to himself. Men whose education and culture are no guarantee that they appreciate the aims and methods of Hindu civilisation,—men who are simply the creatures of impulses which they have contracted from Western associations or sympathies,—men whose one ambition or mission in life is to act as if Heaven's one aim in creating the world is to afford an arena for the free exercise of their energies and the display of their new enthusiasms are certainly not the men who can appreciate the import or importance of our Dharma. The Rishis who have proclaimed our Dharma have assigned the task of determining rules of conduct not specially enjoined and laid down by them (अनाम्नातेषु धर्मेषु) to a class of persons known as (शिष्टाः) Sishtas :—

> धर्मेणाधिगतो यैस्तु वेदः सपरिबृंहणः ।
> ते शिष्टा ब्राह्मणा ज्ञेयाः श्रुतिप्रत्यक्षहेतवः ॥
>
> "Those Brahmanas must be considered as sishtas who by the practice of (Brahmacharya and other) Dharmas, have understood the Vedas together with the subsidiary studies which help in discovering their true import and who possess the revealed proofs of the (purport of the) texts."

Such sishtas are sure to expound with unanimity what should be done in all cases of doubt and difficulty. Where many or any such men are not available, Manu lays down that assemblies (*Parishads*) must be assembled to declare the Dharma. Slokas 110-115 of Manu Chap. XII lay down the rules for constituting such an assembly. Yajnavalkya, who is among the foremost of the Indian Rishis, also states :—(I. 9)—

> चत्वारो वेदधर्मज्ञाः पर्षत्त्रैविद्यमेव वा ।
> सा ब्रूते यं स धर्मः स्यादेको वाऽध्यात्मवित्तमः ॥
>
> "Four (Brahmins) knowing the Dharma declared in the Veda, or versed in the three Vedas form a Parishad. That which they declare, or that which one who is foremost among those who know the science of the Atman declares, constitutes Dharma."

Such Parishads of Sishtas are not now easy to constitute, as sishtas are rare, and great *Brahma-jnanis* are either

not found at all, or there is no means known of discovering who they are at the present day. Before the establishment of British rule, Hindu sovereigns who observed the rules of Dharma placed such of the Brahmins as were recognised sishtas above the anxieties of earning a livelihood. They lived away from all contact with worldly taints and troubles, and lived the life of the spirit, and were indeed the world's highest and noblest,—saints whose word was law and whose gracious will was no other than Heaven's Command. In the absence of such men the modern Indian state cannot, and ought not to, rely on the unauthorised and un-authoritative views (or fancies, rather) expressed by others. The Dharma—its observance, neglect, or transformation, or disfiguration, or aught else—must be left entirely to the will of the people themselves, so long at least as the people's morals do not violate all self-evident rules or maxims of right and wrong, and then the existing law is ready to take cognisance of them in the future, as it has done in the past. No modern government, whether it claims to be Home Rule or foreign rule, can have any right to interfere with Hindu Dharma so long as the people remain Hindus in religion. Any one who is dissatisfied with the existing constitution and working of Hindu society has, under British rule, unmolested freedom to choose his own religion, leaving us to go our own way. There is none to compel him to conform to its customs and regulations. Here we may refer our readers to Mr. J. S. R. Sarma's letter published in our seventh issue under the heading, "Indian Self-Government Scheme and Hindu Social Reform." Mr. Sarma is a dramatist, a graduate, and the head of a big educational institution, and his views are expressed as follows:—"No question of majority or minority, of a small section or big section shall ever be allowed to enter into the consideration of the Hindu social problem which is purely of a religious basis and character. Social and religious institutions must be distinctly and absolutely placed beyond the scope and purview of the secular legislatures." And again:—"The Hindu society, unlike the social institutions of other nations in the world, is unique and has never been made by any body of secular and irreligious laymen, but was created by God-inspired sages and seers, nay by the Almighty Lord Himself— चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः । Bhagavad Gita—without any reference to unanimity, majority or minority among the members of the Hindu Aryan Society. It stands to reason, therefore, that those who have never had any hand or voice in the build of the Hindu society cannot have any manner of right to unmake and mar it, &c."

If, however, our British rulers resolve to allow, *in any special case*, even the *slightest* interference with the existing Hindu law and the custom founded on it, no legal force should be given to a proposal unless it has been submitted to, and approved by, a specially-constituted assembly of learned and pious Brahmins who represent the ancient Hindu wisdom and its ideals of Dharma. Such an assembly, we maintain, should be composed of Brahmins, for to them have ever been assigned, in the social codes of the divine founders of our society, the function of being the custodians of our Dharma. Now, the difficult

practical problem arises,—How to constitute such an assembly ?

We have already referred to the Brahmin functionaries of temples, and the beneficiaries of our various trusts created in connection therewith. Then we have the heads of various Mutts, who still preserve to a large extent the traditions of the genuine priesthood of the past ages and have a numerous following of disciples of all castes. There are still also Brahman pundits of learning and virtue whom the Government have recognised by conferring on them the title of Mahamahopadhyaya. All these may be invited to send delegates to an assembly or college of Pandits which is to be specially constituted for the purpose of giving a final and unanimous decision. We do not by any means feel satisfied that such an assembly will give a decision which will be satisfactory from the Dharmic standpoint. In an age of commercialism and communal and factious strife, in an age when the moral and divine laws of love and faith and good will among men have been replaced everywhere by the fierce passions and brutal savagery of animalism and in a land where everything Western is glorified and everything indigenous and Indian is *ipso facto* condemned by new men, we confess that we cannot be certain what debasing influences will be brought to bear on the election of the members of such an assembly and on their proceedings and decisions, and hence we have serious doubts whether we shall have in it a body thoroughly reliable or competent for the fulfilling of the function allotted to it. But we can think of no other satisfactory means of arriving at a satisfactory solution of this difficult and momentous problem. We trust Government will not in any case entrust the new legislatures with any power to deal with the social usages of the Hindus, for that would be to embark on the unholy and heinous errand of destroying or transforming a society which has had a unique origin and constitution during all the unnumbered ages of its ageless past.

Dewan Bahadur P. Rajagopalachariar on Depressed Classes.

All unbiassed men will be thankful to our esteemed and high-placed countryman, Dewan Bahadur Rajagopalachariar, for the help he has rendered to the cause of social progress and social peace by the manner in which he spoke at the recent celebration of the anniversary of the Depressed Classes Mission Society. Hindus who usually come forward to express their views on this question are generally only anxious to show off their own wonderful glory in attaining to a position of absolute freedom from all prejudice, assume an intolerable air of superiority, and proclaim how they have risen above the grovelling and despicable crowd of men who still conform to old habits and ideals of living. The ego is always prominent in these men, and they are always more or less disposed to burst forth into autobiographical reminiscences calculated to titillate their own willing ears or others. Dewan Bahadur Rajagopalachariar is cast in a different mould. His head is ever on his shoulders and does *not* get hidden or absorbed within the recesses of a heart which knows itself well even while beating in response to the demands of the time-spirit and to the well-known

and hackneyed tunes of universal brotherhood and benevolence. Hence he is able to throw a flood of light, and not only the classes concerned but the entire people of this Presidency are grateful to him for treating the subject from a practical point of view and rendering substantial help to all who are interested in the problem.

In the *first* place, the Dewan Bahadur points out that there are "several sections of the community who with great advantage may be classified as depressed, ignorant, backward, and so on." The whole Indian nation, in our view, is, and has been in a growing condition of depression. The so-called depressed classes are only those sections of the community which stand lowest of all in the scale of depression. We think that no truly discerning Indian would attempt to raise any one at the expense of another,—for that would leave us no better than we were or are, or it might render us worse still. Our endeavour must be to help all, and it must not be to enable one to rise while others go down or sink into the ocean.

A *second* fruitful idea of the Dewan Bahadur's is that "they (the depressed classes) should be kept out of politics." For, "their condition is the result of a system for which all sections are responsible." From this the Dewan Bahadur's fruitful conclusion is that "all should co-operate in trying to work out a better state of affairs for them; it is as well that nothing should be done to embitter the feelings of other sections towards them or their feelings towards other sections." He explains that he means this as "a matter of warning to those who are interested in this question." In these days, many champions of depressed classes, real and imaginary, hope to be able to advance their cause by the causing of unnecessary embitterment and alienation between different communities in the land. We consider that this will only bring on mischief all round, and already it has put the cause of Indian progress back by half a century at least.

Then the Dewan Bahadur goes on to remark that the members of the community itself should be helped to come forward and take up the work of improvement. This sage counsel will not be to the taste of the men who wish to play a great and imperishable role in human affairs as philanthropic helpers whose universal benevolence enables them to stand forth as the sure harbingers of national progress and glory. But the Dewan Bahadur knows the world, and can appreciate a situation. He truly observes regarding outside helpers.—"Their efforts will be comparatively barren, unless they could get the whole thing done through the agency of the classes they seek to benefit." Heaven helps those who help themselves. At the same time, the Dewan Bahadur did not fail to tell his audience:—"Do your level best to fit them up and then co-operate with them." "In all associations, people of other communities may co-operate, give money, and help in a thousand and one ways to advance the cause of the depressed classes"

The Dewan Bahadur spoke very excellent and sensible words about equality. He said that, in spite of his travels and the "intellectual discipline" he had subjected himself to, "on some occasions at once the revultion comes off"; that, whenever he sits by the side of a Pulaya, "clean and pure"

as he may be, "I would take him for a man of a higher class,—when I sit with him I feel as if something had taken place to me"; "getting that feeling of equality is a very much more difficult thing than saying it." We are of opinion that these observations of the Dewan Bahadur are very valuable, and they should place us on our guard against the attempt to go contrary to the instincts implanted by nature in man. The Hindus have built up the fabric of their society on the foundations furnished by nature, and so they have lasted so long without very great change, and still have in them the elements and prospects of lasting stability. It is the attempt to overthrow nature's barriers that has brought troubles and revolutions.

In the concluding portion of the Dewan Bahadur's speech, he asked his audience to "concentrate, attention" on the fact that "these people, are like ourselves, human beings only, and for inscrutable reasons of which we are not aware, they have not the chance of getting good food, good clothing, good education, etc., like ourselves." Evidently he referred to this fact in order to introduce his later exhortation to the audience:—"This is a matter in which every one of you should try good service. Much of the future of this country depends on your ability to live down this terrible evil." We have already given expression to similar views in our own columns and also pointed out various means and measures for bringing about the betterment of the material condition of the Panchamas, and also of their spiritual condition.

The Dewan Bahadur said also,—"I do not want to cover other grounds,"—evidently referring to the communal representation of the depressed classes &c. But he had already said at the beginning,—"A public servant is not supposed to talk of politics, and I am a public servant."

Notes and Comments.

We are very glad that Government have resolved "to commit to heads of colleges" the discretion to deal with the question of the attendance of students at political meetings and their participation in politics. We have always held that students should not be allowed to "participate in politics," but should be free—subject to the direction and guidance of heads of colleges—to attend meetings and make themselves acquainted with the position of public affairs. Indian students are docile and devoted to their teachers, if only the latter have brains and *bonhomie*. Teachers and heads of colleges, whether Englishmen or Indians, get on very well on the whole with their students. Occasionally we come across with men who have strange ideas as regards discipline and behaviour of students, and in fact look on students as so many bombs in the making. But ordinarily the relations between teachers and students are cordial and even intimate and friendly, and the latter do not at all disobey orders. If heads of institutions exercise a wise care and proper discrimination and if they state sound reasons when they resolve to prohibit them from attending a meeting, students will, we feel sure, not at all be disposed to disregard their teachers' counsel and orders. It is absolutely necessary that, as matters stand, Principals should discriminate between meetings and meetings. For raw youths loafing about and reckless or uncultured women with little training and less responsibility are sometimes found addressing meetings and crowds of all kinds, and often students flock together out of pure curiosity. Of late years the evil has grown, and will become intolerable when the country swarms with bands of speakers sent out to keep up a constant popular agitation. Our students ought certainly

to have the opportunity of listening to all really capable and responsible public men who are accepted (or acceptable) leaders in the land. But they should not be allowed to roam about and to have access to every place of public resort where they can gaze at objects of curiousity capable of affording a pleasant passing sensation by simply repeating certain set formulas taught to them or by vomiting sensational and sentimental rubbish.

* * *

While we certainly sympathise with Government's anxiety that our students' relations to politics and politicians should be such as can be approved by all right-thinking men and that heads of colleges should guide them aright, we do not understand why Government is not equally anxious about the proper conduct of their studies. For instance, there have been so many failures in English year after year. The strain put on our boys in order that they may acquire a superior knowledge of English is great and long-continued, and yet that object has not been gained. Reform is urgently needed, and ought not to be delayed. The standard now aimed is too high. There is a mistake widely prevalent,—and it consists in supposing that Indians acquire their command of the English language during the time they spend in schools and colleges. Every educated Indian knows that his English studies continue for years afterwards and that he only slowly acquires his power of expression. During his stay at school and college a multitude of subjects claims his attention, and the time and opportunity for the practice of English composition is limited. We find that our opportunities for studying and writing English grow with years, and that our command of the language grows until it becomes almost our second nature. Whenever the late lamented Professor M. Rangacharya spoke at public meetings or amid the inner circle of his intimate friends all admired the skill which he displayed in the construction of his sentences and the easy and natural flow of his thought in an English style racy, elegant, and dignified. The same was also true of the late Hon'ble V. Krishnaswami Aiyar. In an earlier generation we had such men as Sir T. Madhava Rau, Sir A. Seshiah Sastri, V. Ramiengar, Gopala Rao, and Ranganadha Mudaliar, who had a reputation as English writers and speakers to which perhaps none to-day can aspire. We therefore think that it is nothing but folly to require a high standard of knowledge or writing in English while the boys are still studying in colleges. The strain which it puts on young men prematurely causes ruin,—in fact many ruined for life. Our present-day English teachers and examiners must realise that we learn English even after we leave college, and that we unfailingly acquire a superior command of English in due time. It is nothing short of harebrained and senseless frivolity to suppose that our students should be made to acquire all their command of English while they are still studying at college.

* * *

What is chiefly required from our college professors and teachers is that they should help students to cultivate a taste for study and research. Herein we have ample reason to think that most of our teachers whether they hail from the West or the East, have proved conspicuous failures. They do their work with the burden of the thought of the requirements of the University Examination constantly pressing on their minds. The curricula of studies prescribed by the University are unwholesomely burdensome, and heaven alone knows why. This was not so till quite recently and the change is a good deal for the worse. All the time at the students' disposal is devoted to the getting up of prescribed books and subjects and they have none to devote to the learning or cultivation of methods of research and a taste for study and meditation. The one faculty cultivated is memory, and even this attempt more often fails than not owing to the enormous strain on the mind. If the examination test is made easy and fewer subjects and books are set, there will surely be more time for study and thought, and for search of facts and the finding of them by the students themselves. The present hot-house system of producing

Anglicised Indians is a snare and a crime which ought not longer to encumber the Indian soil. The method above suggested is not only best fitted to cultivate the intellect, but also to promote manliness. It is only when the young Indian works for himself or discovers facts himself that he can really feel himself a man,—not when he is a passive tool in other men's hands or a passive receptacle for other men's thoughts. The Indian of to-day does not feel himself a man, and herein lies the condemnation of the present system.

***

We think all the defects and difficulties of to-day will pass only when the Vernacular becomes the medium of instruction, and English is relegated to the position of a second language. The time has come for it, and our rulers ought seriously to turn their attention to this matter. In Japan where the modern epoch commenced later than here, this stage was reached long ago, and in fact it was never lost sight of. In this Presidency the attempt has always been to concentrate the energy on the attempt to Anglicise the Indian's power of thought and expression, and the result has been pure devastation and barrenness in a soil once rich and productive. The South Indian mind is more docile and more easily subject to control than the Bengalee mind and Bengalee human nature; and so we find that while Bengal has produced a succession of great men in every branch of knowledge and activity, we have here a dead level of uniformity, and the thoughts, ambitions, and activities of men have on the whole a lower bent and aim here than in Bengal.

***

What is the remedy? To start national institutions where the energies of the students are to be concentrated on the Vernacular languages, and on science and industry. The Tata Institute and the Hindu University of Benares raised high expectations, but so far they have not been fulfilled. These two institutions ought for the present to be enough,—one for North India, and the other for South India—to render Indian education at once more practical and more fruitful. But, if they are not available for the gaining of the objects in view, another attempt can, and ought to be, made by the community of this Presidency. We want at least one institution where the training given is such that it will produce men fit to develop into genuine masters of art and captains of industry who will restore to us the "wealth of Ind" sung by the poet in a former age and which now remains but a tradition and a memory, if it does not also seem a fable or a dream.

Wanted a Board of Charitable Endowments.

(By R. Ganapathy Aiyar b.a., b.l.)

In the year 1817, the Madras Government passed a regulation for the due appropriation of the incomes of lands etc., granted (1) for the support of Mosques, Hindu Temples and Mutts and other public purposes; (2) for the maintenance and repair of bridges, choultries and chattrams, and other public buildings, stating in the preamble, that "considerable endowments have been granted in money, or by assignments of land, and of the produce of land" for the above purposes. Under this Regulation, the general superintendence of all such endowments was vested in the Board of Revenue, who carried into effect the duties entrusted to them, through local agents, who were the Collectors of the District ex-officio, with or without any other public officer appointed by the Governor-in-Council to act in conjunction with him. To remove any misunderstanding, it was expressly stated in that Regulation that the object was "solely to provide for the due appropriation of lands or endowments granted for public purposes agreeably *to the intent of the grantor* and *not to resume any part of them or of their produce for the benefit of Government.*" Then, in the year 1863, the Religious Endowments Act was passed by the Government of India, whereby the Board of Revenue and the Local agents were relieved from the duties imposed on them by the previous Regulation of 1817 so far as those duties embraced the superintend-

ence of Endowments granted for the support of Mosques or Hindu temples and for other Religious uses, and special provisions were made for them by transferring them to Trustees (mostly heads of Mutts) or Devastanam Committees. The mismanagement of these Religious Endowments has been so scandalous that attempts after attempts were successively made to rectify the Act, but to no purpose hitherto; only recently some faint hope has been given. If these Endowments, exceeding in their income all the Local Boards and Municipalities in the Presidency taken together, had some trusted representatives of their own in the Legislative Councils, matters would have been far different.

Till about the year 1869, the Accountant General, was a Trustee, as maintaining a separate account of the incomes and surpluses of several of these large Endowments, (both Temples and Chattrams), for the maintenance of which the Government has granted a Dastick allowance. The annual surpluses of these Endowments accumulated to such a considerable extent in lakhs in the course of several years, that their usurpation was very tempting. Evidently the Endowments must have been starved. About the year 1869, the Accountant-General set the ball in motion by bringing to the notice of the Government the inconvenience of keeping two separate accounts, one on behalf of the Government and another on behalf of the Endowments as Trustee and proposed the amalgamation of the two accounts—a very nice way of simplifying, indeed! In spite of the express provision of the Regulation of 1817 "not to resume any part of them for the benefit of Government," the scandal was perpetrated; but, at the same time, it must be mentioned to the credit of some of the Collectors of that period that they made a manly and vigorous protest against the proposal returning the inconvenient reply to Government that it will amount to an indirect usurpation of trust funds—With what result?—only to provoke a censure. (I once published in the South Indian Mail the manly and scrupulous reply, dated 20—3—1870 of the then Collector of Madura which is the only redeeming feature in this melancholy episode). Even now, these religious and charitable Institutions are annually granted only a small amount as dastick allowance out of all proportion to the incomes derived and taken by the Government from the endowed properties. When these wrongs caused by the Government to our Religious and Charitable Endowments were brought to the notice of His Excellency Sir Arthur Lawley, the Governor of Madras, in the Address presented by the Madura District Peoples' Association (when I was its Secretary) he quietly passed over the subject in his reply by making the observation that "it has become a matter of ancient history." A subsequent Governor of Madras also, gave no better reply when the matter was brought to his notice in another address. But, the public interested in these Endowments, may well ask, what is the arrangement made by the Government to remind them of their trusts and prevent the recurring of similar "history." When all the papers were placed before the late Mr. V. Krishnasawmy Aiyar for his consultation, he strongly advised that the matter may be taken up by the whole Presidency and placed before the Secretary of State for rectification.

Though the Revenue Board was relieved in 1863, with regard to the Religious Endowments, the duties and powers vested in it in respect of Charitable Endowments under the Regulation of 1817 still continue. Under the Madras Local Boards Act (S. 51) power is given to the Revenue Board to transfer to the Local Board concerned the management and superintendence of any such Endowment; similarly, under the District Municipalities Act, (S. 26) power is given to transfer such management to the Municipalities concerned. So far as the maintenance and repair of bridges is concerned, the transfer of Endowments relating to them to the District Boards and Municipalities is quite appropriate. But, let us see presently what happens when the transfer is made of Choultries or Chattrams and other Charitable Endowments to them. Besides the above Legislative Enactments,

we have another, known as the "Charitable Endowments Act" (No. VI of 1890), in which a "Charitable purpose" is defined to "include relief of the poor, education, medical relief, and the advancement of any other object of general public utility, but does not include a purpose which relates exclusively to religious teaching or worship." Under this Act, the Governor-General-in-Council may appoint an officer of the Government by the name of his office to be "*Treasurer of Charitable Endowments*" for the territories subject to any Local Government. The person or persons acting in the administration of the trust, (if the property is already held in trust for a charitable purpose), or by the person or persons proposing to endow some property in trust for such a purpose, may apply to the Local Government, who may vest the property by notification in the "Treasurer of Charitable Endowments" and settle a scheme for the administration thereof. In addition to the above provision of law, the Advocate General and Official Trustee possess certain powers with respect to any charity.

***

These are the arrangements made so far by the Government for the proper administration of the vast properties endowed to charity in this land specially organized for Dharma. Let us now see how far they are efficient or sufficient for the purpose in view. The failure of the Religious Endowments' Act became so scandalous that even the Government of India has been made to recognize the failure and the necessity for a modification. With regard to other Hindu Charitable Endowments, they are mostly administered by District Boards and Municipalities (besides several large Endowments under private management of the founders). What are these District Boards and Municipalities? Are they fit by their constitution or composition to scrupulously discharge the duties of the charitable trust? Their constitution has been framed to suit entirely different purposes—material purposes, common not only to the Hindus, but also to the Mahammadans and Christians—in short, common to all the residents of a locality in their material welfare irrespective of religion. The result of this arrangement is very anamolous. Christian Missionaries, actively working for breaking down Hinduism and for the disruption of our Religious and Charitable Endowments, as a vital means thereof, find themselves entrusted with a voice in the agreeable task of controlling our Charitable Endowments, through the District Boards and Municipalities—Who will miss such an excellent opportunity? Ordinary Christian and Mahammadan members, interested in seeing their collapse or, at all events, indifferent as to their fate or efficient management, sit round the table for discussion and vote on our Charity. That portion of the educated Hindus, (whether Brahmana or not), alien in their spirit, unable to think except in terms of the Western thought, materialistic or almost atheistical in their tendencies, blind to the value of the Institutions reared up by their ancestors for their benefit, patriotic to the extent of wishing a decent burial of their past as something to be ashamed of, but still vociferous in proclaiming their solicitude for the welfare of the Indian nation, look upon these Endowments as relics of some barbarous period of mediæval India and, getting into the Managing Boards, assist in the so-called administration of these charities. These Westernised Hindus, who will think it a shame and a dishonour to peep into the premises of our temples or Chatrams, who are not willing to add even a pie to the grand Endowments of their more far-seeing ancestors; whose wise heads nod at the ignorance and folly of the present-day endowers and worshippers, and go to the length of even dissuading them from their actions supposed to be ignorant and prejudicial to the progress of modern Society, are yet the first to stand up as their champion and to claim a voice in their management, feeling no scruples to advocate a diversion of the funds to purposes far remote from the intention of their founders. No doubt their ranks are few, but, their materialistic push is such that at the momentum takes them into the source of power and prestige. In their view, the non-English-knowing orthodox,

treated as a stranger in his own sacred Mother-land, must be disposed of only with a handful of rice without being unnecessarily burdened with wordly cares and troubles. Still, it frequently happens that when this motely assembly sitting round the Council table, (whether of the Devastanam, the District Board, Municipality or Legislative) think with wondering gaze how best to deal with these lingering remnants of the past, some educated Hindu with some knowledge of their underlying thought and value, rises up to set them right—all to no purpose—for, what use is the dreamy philosophy of the ante-diluvian Vyasa or Sankara in this busy present day India! Such are their thoughts and, in this atmosphere of hazy notions, who is there that can be bold enough to pierce through?

Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that our religious and charitable foundations are dwindling day by day, gradually losing much of their efficacy and efficiency. Already a distant Privy Council has decided that a gift or bequest to "Dharmam" is void on account of its vagueness and uncertainty; and the word of the Privy Council is the Veda for all the Indian Courts. Already the Law of Limitation has made havoc upon our Endowments, encouraging unscrupulous Trustees as well as their purchasers. If a few feet of ground be lost, the Government can recover them back in 60 years; but if a whole village be lost by the winking of the managing Trustee no hope of recovery after 12 years. How long are these evils to be allowed to grow! Are they to continue even after His Imperial Majesty the King Emperor has earned the goodwill of the crowning at Hastinapura? Are they not to be rectified even after His Minister, the Secretary of State for India, has set his foot on the sacred soil of the Indian shores?

But, how are they to be rectified? They can be rectified only by relieving the overworked Revenue Board, the District Boards and the Municipalities of their superfluous burden and entrusting all Endowments (including those of the Court of Wards now managed by I. C. S. Agency as in Sivaganga) to a Central Board of Charity to manage through Agency Boards in each District, with well-defined duties and powers; to constitute these Central and Local Charity Boards in such a way that they consist only of those god-fearing persons of all classes of Hindus, who are deeply interested in the preservation and furtherance of the original objects of these Endowments; to remedy the evils growing out of the present enactments and pass suitable measures; and to keep out the bug-bear of limitation at least to the period of a life-time of 60 years.

These are not too much to ask of an Imperial Parliament which has enacted the "*Charitable Trusts Act of 1853*" for affording in their own country, "great additional facilities for detecting and remedying breaches of trust in charity matters" by appointing a separate *Board of Charity Commissioners*. The Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India need not shirk the responsibility which they owe to the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, especially when they are managing and spending large sums of Indian money every year for the maintenance of a wide Christian Ecclesiastical department in India as a part of the State machinery. The rectification has been too long delayed and, before it becomes too late to mend, all persons interested in the proper preservation of the Hindu Endowments shall make the necessary and successful effort to place them on a better footing.

Pencillings by the Way—VII.

By S. P. Thiagarajan.

Readers of European history know that in the West the spirit of freedom and the spirit of religion have been pursuing courses diametrically opposed to each other. The astonishing spectacle is there seen—to the Hindu at least it is paradoxical—where "the religionists are the enemies of liberty and the friends of liberty attack religion; the high-minded and the noble advocate subjection, and the meanest and most servile minds preach independence; honest and enlightened

citizens are opposed to all progress, whilst men without patriotism and without principles are the apostles of civilisation and intelligence." The coming of Protestantism only accelerated this antagonism; for it must be remembered that though Catholicism exhorted men to be obedient, it certainly did not prepare them for inequality. Indeed by their obedience to the precepts of the Church, all true Catholics were rendered equal. The tendency of Protestantism is in the contrary direction. It "generally tends to make men independent, more than to render them equal." Thus onwards to the French Revolution, when the exponents of liberty began by demolishing religion. It will be admitted that one very powerful reason which contributed to this antagonism between the spirit of religion and the spirit of liberty in the West is the alliance of religion with the temporalities of the State. As a brilliant French writer has said, the Church cannot share the temporal power of the State without being the object of a portion of that animosity which the latter excites. Not so, under our ancient Hindu polity. One is simply lost in raptures as he contemplates the wisdom of the seers of old. Religion amongst us, our matchless Dharma transcends everything and interpenetrates all forms of society and all human action. Rightly understood and rationally interpreted, the Dharma is the only compelling force in modern days in favour of a genuine democracy. Amongst us therefore the question has never risen and can never arise of the incompatibility of Dharma and Democracy. The opinions of this journal, from time to time, on current Indian and world-problems will illustrate this position. It is because of the foreign inspiration of our leaders, as I pointed out in an earlier issue, that there is sought to bolster up an antagonism between Varnasrama Dharma and the forces of democracy in our land.

The great austerity and the grace of our manners have often been objects of admiration to many sympathetic foreigners. This is in the first instance due to religious faith. It is perhaps true that religion is often unable to restrain man from the numberless temptations of fortune; nor can it check that passion for gain which every incident of his life contributes to arouse." But the influence of religion over the mind of woman is incontestably supreme and women everywere are the protectors of morals. This is not the occasion to contest some of the current heresies about Hindu Women. Angels have been described, but have rarely been seen. The Hindu woman is an angel—thus wrote that austere son of India, Srijut Shishir Kumar Ghosh. There is certainly no country in the world where the tie of marriage is so much respected or conjugal happiness is more worthily or highly appreciated than classic and even modern India. In the West, almost all the disturbances of society arise from the irregularities of domestic life. To despise the natural bonds and legitimate pleasures of home, is to contract a taste for excesses, a restlessness of heart and the evil of fluctuating desires, says De Tocqueville. And hence it is that Varnasrama Dharmis have always been opposed to the many attempts that have been made and are still being made, to disrupt our home and tamper with our marriage ideals. The tendency of both the laws and the manners of the Hindu community in its days of splendour has been perfectly democratic. And down to very recent times we displayed the manners of a free people and examples of such may be met with even in these days. In these latter days, degradation has come upon us and the Varnasrama Dharmis rightly contend that only if we revive the ancient spirit of freedom can we again become free and democratic. It is necessary to make a remark here. There are some nations who sacrifice their own desires to those of their sovereign with pleasure and with pride, "thus exhibiting a sort of independence in the very act of submission." These peoples are miserable, but not degraded. There is a great difference, as a learned writer points out, between doing what one does not approve and feigning to approve what one does; the one is the necessary case of a weak person, the other befits the temper of a lackey.

We are convinced that the most advantageous situation and the best possible laws cannot maintain a constitution in spite of

the manners of a country; whilst the latter may turn the most unfavourable position and the worst laws to some advantage. The importance of manners is a common truth to which study and experience incessantly direct our attention. A brilliant man of genius indeed regards it as a central point in the range of human observation, and the common termination of all enquiry. The decay of religious faith, the relegation of our matchless Dharma to a secondary place in our national life of these degenerate days is the prime cause of that degradation in our manners and morals that has pained every thoughtful lover of the race. There are men amongst us who have ceased to believe in the Dharma, without adopting any other religion; others again are in the perplexities of doubt and already affect not to believe; and yet again there are others who are afraid to avow that faith in the Dharma which they still cherish in secret. Amidst these lukewarm adherents and ardent antagonists, the Varnasrama Dharmi bears the torch of faith. Men whose aims are transient, men whose sole concern is with the chances of the politics of the hour may and do look upon him as an opponent who should be got rid of. But the Varnasrama Dharmi is hostile to no one in the world. He does not consider the society he lives in as the Colosseum where religion is bound to face its thousand foes. Hence he loves his contemporaries, whilst at the same time he condemns their weaknesses and laments their errors. If the reader places himself at this view point, bearing in mind also the truth of the statement advanced above that the manners of a people are the surest bulwark of freedom and that religion is the one supreme inspirer of manners—taking the word in a comprehensive sense to denote the character of mind,—it will not be difficult to understand the Varnasrama Dharmi's relation towards the progressive movement in modern India. This is the more necessary at this juncture, inasmuchas one school labels the Varnasrama Dharmi as a reactionary—a meaningless word by the way,—whilst another school charges him with a desire to perpetuate "ancient exploded inequalities."

At the present day, our nation is passing through an epoch of its existence—I am using the inimitable language of De Tocqueville throughout this description—at which the ancient customs of the people are changed, public morality destroyed, religious belief disturbed, and the spell of tradition broken, whilst the diffusion of knowledge is yet imperfect, and the civil rights of the community are ill secured, or confined within very narrow limits. *The country then assumes a dim and dubious shape in the eyes of the citizens; they no longer behold it in the soil which they inhabit, for that soil is to them a dull inanimate clod; nor in the usages of their fathers, which they have been taught to look upon as a debasing yoke; nor in religion for of that they doubt; nor in the laws which do not originate of their own authority; nor in the legislator, whom they fear and despise.* The country is lost to their senses, they can neither discover it under its own nor under borrowed features, and they entrench themselves under the dull precincts of a narrow egotism. They are emancipated from prejudice without having acknowledged the empire of reason; they are neither animated by the instinctive patriotism of monarchical subjects nor by the thinking patriotism of republican citizens; but they have stooped half-way between the two, in the midst of confusion and of distress.

Hence it is that the Varnasrama Dharmi looks with a certain kindly tolerance over the various heretic movements in modern India, born as they all are of the eternal struggle of the national spirit to be free. The Varnasrama Dharmi is assured that to retreat is now impossible. Disinterested patriotism being dead, we have only to proceed by accelerating the union of private with public interests. The Varnasrama Dharmi does not lay it down, as an incontestable truth, that this result can only be obtained by granting immediately to all the members of the community the exercise of political rights. But he does maintain that "the most powerful, and perhaps the only, means of interesting men in the welfare of the country which we still possess is to make them partakers in the Government." At the present epoch, civic

zeal seems to be inseparable from the exercise of political rights. And the Varnasrama Dharmis hold that the number of citizens will be found to increase in proportion as these rights are extended. When religious faith, and the patriotism based thereon are almost dead, the Varnasrama Dharmi recognises the grant of self-government as the only means to arouse the patriotism and the Dharmic sense of the community, now nearly dormant owing to various influences.

It will thus be seen that Varnasrama Dharmis believe in self-government for India; and when to this I add that we are convinced opponents of communal representation, at least of the various Hindu Communities, whatever the expediencies of the moment may dictate to those whom it is the fashion to call our "leaders", it will be seen that we go further, in one essential point, than the Congress-League notabilities. We are not of that "grey shade of quite mouse colour", who say that they are opposed, not to self-government, but to *immediate* self-government, whatever this last expression might mean. Personally I think it is a distinction without a difference, the shadow of an idea rather than an idea by itself. But it has been the fate of man to wrestle with shadows all his life. A shadow, as Hugo somewhere says, is hard to seize by the throat and dash on the ground; hence the apparent formidable nature thereof.

The charge has been made that, if we believe in self-government, our views as they appear in print are paradoxical. Not at all. The reader will be good enough to note our proposition about the relative influence of laws and manners on the spirit of democratic freedom. The grant of self-government would certainly augment the influence of laws. But manners, the whole character of our mind, laws can only affect in an infinitesimal degree. Hence it is that we take our stand on the inviolability of Tradition, of conserving the religious force of the nation, and we, Varnásrama Dharmis, wish that the future Constitution should rule out of the purview of our representative bodies all questions connected with our social or religious Dharma. As our latest Convocation Orator has it: "Happy are the people wise enough to remain faithful to themselves, to their past and to their traditions; happy above all are those who know how to reconcile without a break those traditions with the necessities of improvement. Fortune smiles on them and the future is in their hands." The school of thought, of which this journal is the acknowledged organ, is in accord with this generous sentiment, which is also pregnant with truth. And if we should sometimes write or speak with bitterness, it is because our heart bleeds to see the heretic "leadership" of our national movement, if we except one or two austere souls. It is because we can't help a feeling of righteous anger when we see that the noblest of causes is being allied to an advocacy of the most pernicious and soul-killing revolutionary ideals. It has pleased Providence to call to the leadership of this Holy Land men and women who are determined to uproot whatever the Holy People regard as Dharmic. Hence it is that we desire that these things should be expressly ruled out of the purview of our future representative assemblies. This is not based on a chimerical fear. If the reader looks into the daily sheets for a report of the deputations that waited on, and the addresses that were presented to, Mr. Montagu, he will see the Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association expressing themselves in manner following:—"For the removal of social disabilities and the adoption of progressive social legislation, the memorialists pray that a substantial and effective voice in the Government should be given to the people." The fact is our "leaders" are so enamoured of the Western conception of State and Positive Law that they do not stoop to recognise the horrid extravaganzas that have flown and are still flowing from that conception.

Subject therefore to the all-important proviso, already mentioned, the Varnasrama Dharmi gives his hearty support to the Congress-League scheme; while he goes, at the same time, a step further and denounces communal representation as a snare in the path of the coming Indian democracy.

The Bhagavad Gita

With an English Exposition

By K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI B. A. B. L.

INTRODUCTORY.

(continued)

It is usual in our books to state in regard to each work the subject matter, the inter-relatedness of means and end, the fit aspirant, and the goal (विषय, संबन्ध, अधिकारि and फल). The nature of the eternal verities of life is the subject-matter of this eternal and eternally-glorious work. The inter-relation of means and end in it is the clear exposition of the *Sadhanas* (means) that lead to God-love, God-attainment, God-realisation, and God-union. The fit aspirant is he who like Arjuna is face to face with the clear and clarion call of Duty in the battlefields of life and who throws himslf at the feet of the Lord for enlightenment and uplift. The goal of the work is *Moksha* or the attainment of the perfect and eternal liberation. We must hence approach the study of this holy work with a due sense of the greatness of the theme, the means, and the goal.

Thus we can well sum up the introduction thus. At the beginning of each Kalpa, the energies of the Universe which had been withdrawn into Him begin to have self-expression. They unfold themselves according to an infinite plan present to the mind of the Lord. Just as at the commencement of the evolution of the energies by the will of the Lord begins the cycle (*Kalpa*), so also has the Lord's message of salvation to human souls been given for their guidance at the beginning of the cycle itself. This is the real significance of the Hindu Theory of the origin and meaning of the scriptures. Such message of purification and salvation is the Veda. The Veda teaches the *Pravritti Marga* and the *Nivritti Marga*. The former if followed properly and in a spirit of dispassion and detachment and devotion will lead to the latter and through it to God. The Gita teaches us this truth again and again, and modern commentators who do not recognise this and make action the final goal of life are people who have no real vision as to the real teachings of the Gita. They think that Sri Sankara has suppressed action altogether. This view of theirs is due to a phenomenal error. A beautiful Sanskrit verse says :

न कर्माणि त्यजेद्योगी कर्मभिस्त्यज्यते ह्यसौ ।

Sri Sankaracharya says :

अलंकारो ह्यस्माकं यद्ब्रह्मात्मावगतौ सत्यां सर्वकर्तव्यताहानिः कृतकृत्यता च ।

Hence according to him it is only he that has attained the beatitude of God-realisation that is free from the life of action, for the simple reason that he who is immersed in the nectar of God-realisation cannot act any more than a man in a state of deep sleep can act. But a disciplined life of selfless action and love is the only means to that end, and if any one gives up the means and pretends to have reached that end, he is easily found out and great is his fall. There is all the difference in the world between the man who gives up a life of action and the man whom the life of action gives up as being too high for its sphere. In regard to such pure and liberated souls, who are we, wallowing in the mire of selfishness and sin, to lay down the special paths that they should pursue? This does not mean that any one can take up life dedicated to devotion and contemplation irrespective of his or her birth, station in life, and fitness. Each person's Dharma is determined by his birth which itself is determined by previous *Karmas*. But the attainment of liberation may be due to the consummation of devotion and self-knowledge in the course of previous births or in this birth, and is irrespective of the particular social status or function of the individual. His actual work in the world of phenomena is determined by his birth and station in life. In the case of those who have attained to the highest raptures of God-love, God-vision, and cosmic consciousness, we can realise that the preliminary stage of *Nishkama Karma* and *Chitta Suddhi* alone could have led to such a glorious and heavenly consummation. Such rare and sweet liberated souls will compel our adoration by the very perfection that shines in them and makes ever their bodies a temple of purity and holiness.

(To be continued)

Correspondence.

The views of our contributors and correspondents do not necessarily reflect the policy of this Review—Ed.

Dharma.

It has become the fashion now-a-days to talk loudly of *Dharma* and its essentials but no one seems to have ever attempted to clearly define what that *Dharma* is. The orthodox view that Dharma is the mandate contained in the Vedas does not suit the so-called critical minds of the modern day *as is evidenced* by the bold declaration of Mrs. Besant that "Every Sruti should pass through the fire of thought and criticism," (*Wake up India* "Foreign Travel"). We have no objection to submit *every Sruti* to the fire of criticism but we want to know clearly the basis on which criticism can be rested. We must be clearly made to understand what is meant by "*criticism*"—that lofty term which has become the watchword of the boasting section of the modern mind. Neither Mrs. Besant nor Mr. S. A. Vaneswar, that sound lawyer who wrote on the "*Cult of obedience*," has given a good and convincing account of it. We are left in darkness. But Mrs. Besant further added in her lecture referred to above as follows "What about historical criticism? What about the higher criticism? Are you sure that what you say is authentic, that there are not many interpolations to be found therein, and that no errors have crept in? Why should any particular set of books be kept sacred while all the other scriptures of the world have to justify themselves in the face of scholarship, in the face of knowledge, etc?" Really sensational are these words, and they certainly have had alarming effects on the audience as is evidenced by the present-day agitation for a radical reform of the society. We want to be more enlightened on "what *is* historical criticism?" rather than what *about* historical criticism?" Without knowing what it is nobody will ever be able to apply the test to something else. But before dealing with this question of what is a valid and what is not a valid criticism, we shall try to explain how the ancient Aryans used to understand what Dharma is. The *mimamsakas*, both *Purva* and *Uttara*, the chosen custodians of the traditional Vedic lore, maintain that Dharma is "*Chodana Lakshana*" चोदनालक्षणोऽर्थो धर्मः' (जै. १.१.२) It means that Dharma is that which is indicated by चोदना or injunction or mandate, that is, the mandate contained in the Vedas. By a critical analysis of this Sutra the ancients from Jaimini downwards have understood that चोदना (chodana) alone is a valid Pramana as regards Dharma, meaning thereby that no other Pramana will be of any avail in regard to it. This leads us to inquire whether Dharma can be determined by the ordinary Pramanas or not. Why should chodana, or the sense contained in the verb in the imperative mood alone, be considered as a valid Pramana in determining the nature of Dharma? Why not the Pramanas as Pratyaksha or Ratiocination be accepted as such? This question again leads us to inquire still further whether or not Dharma is well known? If it is universally known, then there is no need to discuss it further? If not there is no necessity for us to discuss about it, for we cannot do that. If there is any clue about it, we may make an attempt worth the name to still further investigate into its nature. Moral Precepts evolved out of long experience running through ages of civilization owing to the gradual and steady awakening of conscience cannot constitute Dharma, although such precepts are to be found included in the Smritis, among Dharma. Why? Because there is no end for the process of evolution that is going on. What seemed to be perfectly innocent in one age was considered to be outrageous in another age. Even in the same age no two recognised intelligent leaders seem to agree not only in minor details, but also in essentials. This is a matter of every day experience. Hence we see clearly that unless there is an unimpeachable source from which we can draw our knowledge, we cannot be sure of our decisions on matters that should be considered *eternal, for Truth must be such*, being gifted only with a fluctuating conscience. Such a source is चोदना and hence, it is the only Pramana to determine धर्मः

K. G. NATESA SASTRI.
Vaidya Visarad.

Printed and Published by T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar B.A. at the Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam.